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**MASS ACTION AND ISLAMIC  
FUNDAMENTALISM:  
THE REVOLT OF THE BROOMS**

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**Stephen C. Pelletiere**



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**Stephen C. Pelletiere**

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## FOREWORD

Just when we appear to be on the brink of a stable world order, the Middle East has erupted with violence. Muslims are calling out for the overthrow of corrupt regimes and the institution of the *Sharia*, the just rule of the Prophet Muhammad. This trend is tied to anger at the failure of ambitious modernization programs, which the lower classes had been led to believe would better their lives. In reaction, they have turned their backs, not only on Marxism, but capitalism as well. This study argues that the failure of U.S. policymakers to recognize the economic basis of this revolt is jeopardizing our vital interests in the area, particularly in the oil-rich Persian Gulf.

The Strategic Studies Institute is pleased to publish this report as a contribution to the debate on U.S. policy in this volatile region.



KARL W. ROBINSON  
Colonel, U.S. Army  
Director, Strategic Studies Institute

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR

DR. STEPHEN C. PELLETIERE is a National Security Affairs Analyst at the Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College. He received his Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of California, Berkeley, in 1978. He is the author of the books, *The Kurds: An Unstable Element in the Persian Gulf*, and the recently published *Chaos in a Vacuum: The Iran-Iraq War*. Additionally, he is author of the Strategic Studies Institute report, *The Kurds and Their Agas: An Assessment of the Situation in Northern Iraq*, and coauthor of *Iraqi Power and U.S. Security in the Middle East* and *Lessons Learned: The Iran-Iraq War*.

## SUMMARY

This report looks at the phenomenon of Islamic Fundamentalism, which currently is threatening the stability of Algeria and several other Middle Eastern countries. It concludes that, contrary to popular belief, there is no such thing as a Pan-Islamic movement.<sup>1</sup> Instead there are numerous Muslims, in widely separated locales, who to varying degrees are dissatisfied with their governments. Only in Algeria, however, has dissatisfaction taken the form of open revolt.

The lower class youths (popularly known as the Brooms)<sup>2</sup> who make up the revolt in Algeria are urbanized peasants. Having immigrated to the cities to better themselves, they have failed to make it into the system. Subsequently they have withdrawn to the urban ghettos<sup>3</sup> where they live off the community. Algeria's rulers for some time pursued a policy of benign neglect toward these youths, and now this treatment has backfired on them, spectacularly. The youths have mounted an astonishingly successful challenge to the government's hold on power.

The youths want power and—as the study points out—probably have the ability to take it. Indeed, there are disturbing similarities between the Algerian experience and the Islamic Revolution of Khomeini in Iran. In both situations, revolts were undertaken to empower previously suppressed elements of the population. This lends a class dimension to the activity.

The author argues that the same conditions that produced rebellions in Iran and Algeria are present in Egypt, Jordan, and Tunisia. Thus, these states, too, are vulnerable to radical Islamic agitation.

He concludes that if many more Middle Eastern regimes fall prey to the radicals, U.S. interests in the area will suffer. Radical Islam looks on Saudi Arabia as the agent of Imperialism and Zionism, and the Saud family as profaners of the Holy Places (Mecca and Medina). Now, when the United



States is becoming increasingly dependent on Persian Gulf oil, we do not want to see the area turned into a cockpit of religious controversy.

# **MASS ACTION AND ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM: THE REVOLT OF THE BROOMS**

## **Introduction.**

Starting in the late 1980s, the world witnessed a succession of events occurring in various parts of the Muslim world that seemed to presage a revival of Islamic Fundamentalism. The most sensational took place in Algeria where, in 1988, a fierce riot erupted claiming 700 lives. Immediately after, a similar outbreak, with additional casualties, occurred in Jordan.

The situation worsened in 1990 after the Algerian government allowed a Muslim political party to run candidates for local elections, where they did surprisingly well. Later, in Jordan, another Muslim party made similar impressive gains after it, too, won permission to compete.<sup>4</sup> This seemed to signal the appearance of a Pan-Islamic movement; Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt also seemed to be candidates for Islamic Fundamentalist agitation. However, as the governments intensified repression, no major disturbances occurred. At the same time, the populations in these countries remained restive.

The media treats the Pan-Islamic movement as a fact.<sup>5</sup> Fundamentalist manifestations are being reported daily in widely separated areas of the globe, including the trans-Caucasus, Central Asia, and Africa. Attempts are made to tie events together into a conspiracy controlled from Tehran.<sup>6</sup>

To look into these claims of a worldwide Fundamentalist revolt, this study was undertaken. The author concludes that a Pan-Islamic movement does not exist. At the same time, however, the current agitation in Algeria resembles, in important aspects, the revolt in Iran against the Shah.<sup>7</sup> In both countries, regimes instituted economic reforms that

malfunctioned, heaping hardship on the lower classes. The latter responded with mass protests. And although the clergy eventually dominated the revolts, the impetus for strife came originally from below—after violence had erupted in the streets, youthful elements and radical imams took control of the mobs and organized them into coherent movements. The author argues that the nature of this spreading violence is misunderstood by U.S. policymakers who view it as a form of cultural protest.<sup>8</sup> Rather, it is intensely political and radical, deriving enormous power from the *sharia*, Islam's legal code, which the radicals wield as a weapon against upper class corruption.<sup>9</sup> He suggests that Egypt, certainly, and perhaps Jordan and Tunisia are vulnerable to the radicals. Unless the movement is checked, the author concludes, vital U.S. interests in the Persian Gulf could be forfeited.

This report is divided into six parts. After this section, events in Algeria are summarized. Next the topic of the Brooms is introduced; these are militants who are the force behind Algeria's revolt. The author makes the case that they, and not the Algerian clerics, are the major actors in this struggle. The next section investigates potential crisis conditions in Egypt, Tunisia and Jordan, and speculates on the likelihood of these governments being overthrown. The danger, although not imminent, is real.

Then the complex issue of repression is taken up, and the results that might be obtained by intensifying its use. And, in the final section, the fundamentalist phenomenon is related to American security concerns. The author believes the movement threatens us most dangerously in the vital area of the Persian Gulf. This being the case, U.S. policymakers are going to have to develop pragmatic strategies to combat it.

Research for this report was conducted in Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt and Jordan. The author spoke with U.S. personnel in the region, and officials in the local governments, the religious establishment, and the secular opposition.

## **The Case of Algeria.**

Algeria gained its independence in 1962, after a long and bloody struggle against France.<sup>10</sup> It thus became one of the few Third World countries to liberate itself. Proud of its revolutionary credentials, Algeria assumed a leadership role in the Non-Aligned Movement. Its first President, Ahmad Ben Bella, aided various liberation movements in Africa and the Middle East, much as did Cuba's Castro at a later date.

When Ben Bella was removed from power in 1965, Algeria scaled back its involvement with radical causes. However it continued to proclaim itself a member of the so-called Rejectionist Front of states at war with Israel, and, like Egypt and Syria, forged ties to the Soviet Union. At the same time, Algeria's position was unique among the Rejectionists because it alone possessed rich reserves of oil and natural gas, the revenue from the sale of which could be used to build infrastructure.

Algeria's economy got a major boost from the Arab oil embargo of 1973 when oil prices shot up on the world market; indeed, the period from 1973 to 1986 could be called its halcyon years. In 1986, however, oil prices sank leaving Algeria with a heavy burden of debt, incurred for infrastructural improvements during the boom.<sup>11</sup>

In return for concessions to the International Monetary Fund, Algeria's government in 1986 enacted an austerity program that included measures to liberalize the economy.<sup>12</sup> This had two important results—it produced intense dissatisfaction among Algeria's poorer citizens whose living standards deteriorated considerably;<sup>13</sup> and it gave birth to a class of politically influential Algerians who got rich by manipulating the reforms.<sup>14</sup> Both developments are important when it comes to viewing the events of 1988, the beginning of Algeria's second revolution.

In 1988 the urban poor of Algiers, Constantine, Oran and Bone—Algeria's leading cities—revolted, and over the course of several days fought pitched battles with police and the army. The revolt developed over the inability of the government to

cope with persistent water shortages.<sup>15</sup> The youths who rebelled were for the most part unemployed and uneducated, the sons of peasants who had immigrated to the cities to better themselves. They were disaffected from the government, which they viewed both as inept and corrupt.

The Front de la Liberation Nationale (FLN), which rules Algeria, is a vanguard party and as such has little use for participatory democracy.<sup>16</sup> It leads the way and the public is expected to follow. Had the party ruled fairly, its arbitrary style might have been tolerated. However, it is notoriously corrupt, dealing in special privileges, particularly in the area of housing, which is critically short in Algeria.

The housing problem touched all lives, but particularly that of the lower class youths, who could not marry until they were settled in homes of their own. Every year when housing lists were posted, anger overwhelmed the youths as they saw apartments going to "friends of the FLN."<sup>17</sup> When, on top of this, the water system broke down, it precipitated a riot.

The high death toll and the ferocity of the revolt appalled the FLN leaders, who seemed momentarily thrown off balance. To defuse the situation, they opened the political process. Whereas formerly the FLN was the only legal party in Algeria, now other parties were allowed to contest elections. Some 60 new parties did eventually appear. From the government's standpoint this was to the good—a large number of parties was expected to dilute the opposition vote. However, among the parties formed was a religious one, and this proved to be a complication.

The Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) grew out of the riots. Clerics who had joined the rioters in the first days of revolt later proclaimed the formation of a popular religious movement. The FIS put forth a program of reforms based on the *sharia*, Islam's legal code. By means of it they proposed to solve all of the country's problems.

No one seems to know why the FLN legitimized the religious opposition, although the comment of one observer strikes a true note—"Arrogance....the FLN had made the (1962) revolution, and it believed itself above challenge."

Nevertheless, in the 1990 elections for local offices, the FIS captured 40 percent of the mayoralties. This was a stunning result, but even at this the FLN did not seem to react. Rather it dismissed the victories as of no consequence; local government, in its view, did not stand for much.

Algeria's neighbors, Tunisia, Egypt and Morocco, were badly shaken by the results. Tunisia, in particular, had implored the FLN not to certify the FIS. Tunisia has its own religious movement, the *Nahda* (Renaissance), which it consistently has refused to legitimize.<sup>18</sup> Egypt had seen its President Sadat assassinated by religious fanatics,<sup>19</sup> and, although initially it suppressed its religious opposition, ultimately it was forced to relent, allowing some limited participation. In Morocco, too, the King has refused to grant legitimacy to an avowedly Muslim party.

For a time, diplomats in Algeria expected the government to cancel the next round of elections for the National Assembly; this did not happen. Instead the politicians adopted the devious course of gerrymandering election districts. At this, the FIS called a general strike, which produced further violence. FIS leaders were jailed and the military imposed martial law. This induced the government to rescind the gerrymandering, and, after prolonged negotiations between it and the FIS, the elections went ahead. The FIS captured 189 of the 430 seats in the Assembly, a clear plurality.

This led the army to intervene. Fearing that the FIS would take over the government, it canceled the run-offs and asked Algeria's president to step down. He did, and handed over authority to a special five man council. And this is the situation as of this writing.

### **Religion vs. Revolution.**

The object of this analysis is to characterize the FIS movement. With this in mind the author intends to take the events just described and make them the basis of the investigation. By focusing the reader's attention on specific details, the movement's true nature can be revealed.

The religious aspect is first explored—it is important to know whether the FIS is exclusively a religious phenomenon or something other. And if it is something else, what would that be?

Practically all sources agree that, prior to 1988, there was no active religious opposition in Algeria.<sup>20</sup> The FLN had crushed all trace of religious protest. It did so even though the clerics had been among the leaders of the original struggle against France. The FLN wanted to make Algeria a secular, socialist state and so eliminated the religious activists who survived the 1962 revolt.

Since there was no active religious opposition before the 1988 riots, the riots must have produced it. Apparently this is the case. At the same time it should be noted that the clerics did not incite the rioters; they became associated with them after the fact. And when they did get involved, initially it was to calm them down.<sup>21</sup>

Ultimately, certain of the clerics were elevated to leadership positions in the FIS, but it was not the peace makers who were selected. Rather, it was firebrands like Ali Bel Hadj. Bel Hadj, a spell binding orator, is a man of great charisma whose forte is whipping up crowds. That the movement should choose a man of this sort as leader seems to confirm the radical character of the revolt.<sup>22</sup>

There is further evidence to support the theory that the movement is radical, namely Bel Hadj's oratorical style. He harangues the crowd in classical Arabic. Few Algerians know the classical because its study was not made compulsory in the schools until the 1970s. Nonetheless, the lower classes favor it, since it is the language of the Koran, and also because it is the antithesis of French, the language of Algeria's elite.<sup>23</sup>

For Bel Hadj to perform his oratory effectively he must work through mediators. Interspersed throughout the crowds, are youths who pick up specific phrases of his address which they call out. The crowd chants these back in unison; in this way great excitement is generated.

The youths who do the mediating are the Brooms. They are the dropouts who have left the university and fallen back into the community (i.e., the poorer quarters of Algiers); there, in a manner of speaking, they have gone native. They have allowed their beards to grow; they wear peasant (*baladi*) dress. They have taught themselves classical Arabic, a means to study the Koran. This gives them the reputation of being pious, but it also is an assertion of class—by opting for Arabic over French, the Brooms are identifying with the poor.

The Brooms are the stalwarts of the movement. They face off against the police; they canvas for new recruits; they organize the rallies. In effect, they are as essential to the movement's progress as are the radical clerics.

Not all of the clerics in Algeria are radical, and not all sympathize with the FIS; some are quite strongly opposed to the movement. This has to do with the nature of Algeria's religious establishment. As is the case in most other Muslim countries, the bulk of Algeria's clergy are paid servants of the state.<sup>24</sup> Among these "official clergy" are those who mistrust a movement that challenges state authority. Some even appear to feel that the FIS adherents are flirting with heresy.

To understand the heresy charge, one needs to know something about the background of the Sunni sect of Islam (to which the majority of Algerian Muslims belong).<sup>25</sup> The sect traditionally discourages direct involvement by the masses with the government; any form of confrontation is made to be an abomination. When redress of grievances is sought, the so-called *ulama* (the religious leaders) take charge of this, by making a formal approach to the government.

The Brooms and the radical clerics have usurped the official clergy's mediating role. They presume to be the judge of right and wrong, and have found texts in the *hadith* to defend their stance.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, they go beyond this, proposing to enact the *sharia*, should they come to power. This latter aspect of the movement is most revealing. Should the *sharia* be adopted, this would drive Algeria's middle classes to flee the country, in effect, clearing out one class so that another could take over.<sup>27</sup> This becomes apparent when one studies the *sharia*; it is quite



puritanical and may be said to be against practically everything that the present elite stands for.

There is, of course, a precedent for a revolution of this type, namely Iran. Iran's revolution began as a mass action, to which the clergy attached itself. Once the Shah was overthrown, radical clergy and revolutionary youth set up a theocracy based on the *sharia*, which initiated a major exodus of middle class Iranians from the country. It was claimed at the time that this represented a terrible waste of talent, i.e., a brain drain. But, obviously, the lower class Iranians who moved into the places vacated by the emigres did not view it so; they were well pleased with the result. Progress in Iran had been set back, but their personal progress had taken a turn for the better.

The similarity of Iranian and Algerian experiences suggests that a new type of revolt has emerged, one in which urbanized peasants and radical clergy combine forces, something on the order of the European peasant revolts of the late Middle Ages. However, the present case involves *urbanized* peasants, some of whom are quite well educated, although they may be unsophisticated in some areas.<sup>28</sup>

In any event, to the extent that the Algerian movement adheres to the Iranian model, it is radical. It is not, as it is made out to be, reformist. It does not seek power peacefully through the ballot box.<sup>29</sup> It is—by practically every test that one can apply—a system-destabilizing element.

Anyone knowledgeable about the Middle East will see a problem here—among specialists, it has always been assumed that Sunnis and Shias were antipathetic to each other, to the extent that a Sunni community would never appropriate a model of revolution from the Shias.<sup>30</sup> It can be seen, however, that the model of Khomeini's revolt *has* been reproduced, fairly closely, in a Sunni land, i.e., Algeria. Now, either the Shias have defied history and succeeded in exporting their ideology to the Sunnis, or something else has occurred. For various reasons, the author believes the latter is the case.<sup>31</sup>

It appears that this is a situation where conditions in one country, Algeria, are similar to those in another, Iran under the Shah, and as a consequence the response of the Algerian

people has mimicked that of the Iranians.<sup>32</sup> In other words, in the author's view, this is a spontaneous occurrence; there is no conspiracy involved here. This being the case, it seems appropriate to ask where else this kind of revolt might occur? Egypt, Tunisia and Jordan will be examined, to see if they, too—as appears to be the case with Algeria—are in a prerevolutionary situation.

### **The Situation Across the Region.**

If the analysis is correct, Algeria is currently in a prerevolutionary stage. Something is happening there which, if not checked, could overturn the existing authority. By its nature this is a grave matter, and one that requires analysis, from the particular standpoint of a sociologist.<sup>33</sup>

In analyzing a prerevolutionary situation it is important to focus on economic conditions because these are crucial to determine the level of popular discontent. If conditions can be ameliorated, regimes under pressure may hope to prevail; if they greatly improve, they may even recover. However, when conditions do not improve, but instead deteriorate, existing regimes are unlikely to survive.

This phenomenon affects a number of regimes, some allies of the United States. It is important to know which are vulnerable to revolution. And even though some are not vital to U.S. interests, their demise could still cause serious difficulty for our foreign policy. With this in mind, the situations of Egypt, Tunisia and Jordan bear examination. Jordan is economically quite vulnerable. The country has virtually no resources to convert into revenue. It has existed for years on subsidies, initially from Great Britain, later from the United States. For awhile the Gulf states supported it as a Confrontation State. However, after the King renounced his role as spokesman for the Palestinians, contributions dwindled. Iraq took up the slack for a time, but now, of course, Iraq is prostrate.

Jordan has been hit doubly hard by the invasion of Kuwait. It lost its principal economic partner (and patron) and gained 500,000 refugees, which it could ill afford to accommodate. It is a miracle the country has not gone under. Ironically, what

appears to be holding it together is the support of the Jordanians for their King; they have backed his stand on DESERT STORM—Palestinians, and a considerable number of non-Palestinian Jordanians, favored Saddam in the crisis. By openly defying the Coalition, King Hussein won his subjects' admiration. To be sure, the King's stand made sense economically—Jordan was tied to Iraq as a trading partner; thus, the King's repeated attempts to negotiate the dispute short of war were, in his subjects' eyes, justified. Despite all the current good will, however, it does not seem likely the King can avoid future difficulty—if things do not improve, serious disturbances will occur, as happened in 1989 when food riots spread throughout the kingdom.

Egypt is in the worst shape economically. At the same time, its economy got an enormous boost from the invasion of Kuwait, since by joining the Coalition it won remission of a great many debts. Nonetheless, with some 55 million inhabitants and a limited amount of arable land, Egypt is an economic basket case; it must run harder and harder merely to stay in place. It will not be long, one assumes, before the advantages of debt remission will have been dissipated, new debts will have been incurred, and the country will once more be facing crisis.

On the other hand, Mubarak enjoyed great popular support for his Kuwait stand. The Egyptians—unlike the Jordanians—did not approve of Saddam's invasion. For them, the invasion spelled the end of a good thing. At the time of the attack, millions of Egyptians were guest laborers in the Gulf. Practically all were driven out.

Now that the crisis is settled, the virtual cutoff of immigration remains. Iraq, quite naturally, is not taking any Egyptians back. However, Kuwait also has shut its doors, apparently as it now mistrusts the Egyptians. And Saudi Arabia, which initially promised to substitute Egyptian workers for Yemenis, has been dragging its feet about doing so.

The Egyptians blame Saddam for this catastrophe—and such it is, since Egypt depends on remittances to keep its economy afloat. Moreover, now that few workers are going overseas (the European Community has also restricted

immigration), Egypt has more mouths to feed, and this is further straining its resources.

Tunisia ordinarily would be considered prosperous by regional standards. Its population—the most westernized of any Arab state—is industrious and tends to be law abiding. Nonetheless the economy has been deteriorating for years, and the country has few resources that it can develop. To complicate matters, immigration of peasants to the city has been accelerating, and this creates the usual problems. As in the case of Egypt, Tunisia has to run to stay in place.

In all of the countries, then, the economies are deteriorating—some are in terrible shape, some not so bad, but all are in trouble. At the same time, the author found no certain indications of imminent unrest. However, the point of the study is that societies in a prerevolutionary state are liable to erupt without warning; rioting that can bring down a government can develop overnight. So the mere fact that there have been few attention-grabbing disturbances should not be seen as reassuring. There is little chance the economies of these countries will improve, and thus not much hope the regimes can offer to their already overburdened populations. This gives rise to tensions, and will almost inevitably drive the regimes to intensify repression—on the principle that, if one has no carrots to profer, one uses the stick.

### **The Paradox of Repression.**

All of the regimes considered here already are police states. In some the situation is well masked, but nonetheless all devote considerable resources to their internal security.

Egypt has probably advanced farthest along this line—it has some 100,000 police, in addition to 400,000 in the military, for a population of 55 million. Anyone who visits Cairo (a city of 14 million) cannot help but notice that police are everywhere. They are positioned in front of all the major hotels, sometimes ranks deep. On tiny *maidans* (squares) there may be as many five to six policemen, some who are there just to monitor the rest. Along elevated superhighways, foot police are spaced at regular intervals.

In Tunisia, the presence is less obvious; nonetheless, the country is as well patrolled. Also in Tunisia there is less deception. The government makes no secret of its repressive practices; it rules by intimidation.<sup>34</sup> Algeria, of course, is under martial law, administered by the army.

One is struck by the varieties of police in these countries. In Egypt, for example, there are the so-called "black police" (the Directorate for Public Security); the "white (National) police"; the General Directorate for State Security and Information; and the *Mukhabarat*.<sup>35</sup>

Apparently the different security departments keep a check on one another. For example, in Egypt in 1984, a rumor spread that the black police were to have their enlistments arbitrarily extended.<sup>36</sup> They mutinied. There being insufficient other police to quell the revolt, the army was brought in. Afterward Mubarak was forced to rule by emergency decree.

The prospect of having to invoke the emergency laws demands extraordinary precautions. To confront a mob that may number in the thousands requires thousands of police on hand. Moreover, since outbreaks occur in several areas at once, this increases the numbers required. Hence, so many police are not redundant; they are there for anticipated crises. If the crises do not develop, all to the good. But should something occur and there not be enough police to handle it--well, this would quite simply spell the end of everything.

Impoverished regimes that must support a large security infrastructure are caught in a dilemma. Money for this must come from somewhere. Most usually it is taken from the public services budget. As the regimes enroll more and more police, they cut down on public services. The communities bereft of these services must look to their own resources. In time they become virtually self-reliant, and having no need for the government, withdraw from its grip.

Communities in Cairo--like Imbaba and Bulaq--are becoming increasingly intolerant of a police presence. In neighborhoods like these the police are not welcome and they know it. In particular, the communities are suspicious of attempts by the police to cultivate informers.<sup>37</sup>

The danger should be obvious. The governments, to preserve themselves, depend on the police. The police depend on surveillance to do their jobs. But, as the communities become self-sufficient—and in the process close themselves off to surveillance—data becomes increasingly difficult to obtain. Finally whole areas slip from the government's control. It is a great mystery what goes on in these quarters; they could be on the point of eruption and few would be aware.<sup>38</sup>

Egypt is the worst case of this, but similar patterns of governmental arteriosclerosis are developing in Tunisia, Jordan and Algeria. Regimes lose their dynamism; they find it harder and harder to perform crucial functions, and then start to lose their bearings. Ultimately, awareness of impaired control triggers panic.

In those cases where disturbed conditions have produced actual revolts, this has developed at the point when information stopped flowing to the center. In Iran, for example, the regime of the Shah, just before it collapsed, exhibited signs of extreme disfunction; it became practically catatonic. The Shah was being subjected to tremendous pressures, to which he could frame no adequate response.<sup>39</sup> In the case of Algeria, one also sees this. The government at several crucial junctures has done nothing, when *immediate* action was demanded.

The regime leaders do not know what to do because their fields of cognition extend no further than the Presidential Palace. The rebellious communities, having sealed themselves off, send out no warning signals. The security services are unable to gather information. Closure is absolute.

Thus, the study concludes that repression may actually be counterproductive for regimes under pressure. Past a certain point, it not only does not assist them to stay in power, it undermines them. Well, then, if repression is no sure guarantee, and if the people cannot be pacified with rewards—what is the fate of these regimes? It seems likely that some, if not all are doomed to suffer severe destabilization in the near future, unless extraordinary action is taken.<sup>40</sup>

This is, certainly, a depressing assessment. But is it unduly alarmist? Probably not. After all, there have been quite a

number of paralyzing riots over the last few years. In Egypt, beside the police riot mentioned, there was a frightening outbreak in 1978, when Sadat nearly lost control.<sup>41</sup> In Tunisia, riots of such intensity occurred in 1984 that the government was forced to abandon a significant program of economic reform. In Jordan, the 1989 bread riots have been mentioned.

But most disturbing of all is the fact that twice now—in Iran in 1979, and presently in Algeria—riots have gotten out of hand; they have not merely erupted to die away after 3 or 4 days. Movements have grown out of them which have organized the lower classes. In Iran, these deprived elements actually succeeded in taking power.

This is something that has not occurred before in the Middle East, at least in recent times. It is a far cry from the military-led coups of the 1950s and 1960s. The current unrest is more like the 1917 revolution in Russia. Obviously, the author regards the phenomenon as a serious threat to U.S. security interests in the area.

### **The Problem of U.S. Security.**

At present U.S. policymakers seem to misunderstand the nature of the threat. It is seen to be emanating from subversive groups like the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt.<sup>42</sup> Thus the remedy put forth is to fund antiterrorism operations.

It is unrealistic to assume that a group like the Brotherhood, or any other subversive organization, can overthrow one of the existing governments. It does not have the material or the intellectual resources for this. On the other hand, a class revolt, as described here, is an imminent, real danger. The tremendous energy released by something of this order—if it did not actually remove the offending regime, could easily disorient it and make it incapable of governing.

The potent ingredient, if it can be described so, is the *sharia*. The legal code of Islam embodies a complete value system and thus constitutes a model along the lines of which a radical society can be constructed. In its simplicity, it is easily comprehended by the barely-schooled masses. And, as this

study tries to show, it can be culled over for injunctions against corruption, injustice and other incendiary topics. In a manner of speaking, the *sharia* is the lingua franca of rebellion in the Middle East. It can be used by Middle Easterners anywhere to destabilize their governments, some of them our friends and allies.

Some may argue that, whereas this certainly is an unfortunate situation, it really has little to do with the United States. The threat, since it comes from within, is an internal problem, something that it is up to the governments themselves to handle. The author disagrees--the United States has a vital interest in Middle Eastern oil, particularly that from the Persian Gulf. As long as we depend on this the United States cannot ignore worsening security conditions in the region.<sup>43</sup>

In the midst of OPERATION DESERT STORM, fierce rioting broke out in Algeria, incited by popular anger at the massive buildup of foreign troops in the Gulf, and outrage over the air war.<sup>44</sup> The riots caused dismay in the West, inasmuch as they were not anticipated. U.S. leaders had convinced themselves--or allowed themselves to be convinced, that popular support for Saddam was negligible.<sup>45</sup> In fact, a sharp undercurrent of hostility to DESERT STORM developed as soon as the operation commenced. However, it was stifled, in the case of Algeria, by the leaders of the FIS;<sup>46</sup> at least initially they were successful in doing this. Unexpectedly, however, the popular anger became such that it could not be controlled. The leaders were thrust aside as the mob took to the streets. Once Algeria erupted, Tunisia followed, and there even was a small outbreak in Egypt (of course the Jordanians erupted, from the first, but this was a special situation).

What this seems to indicate is that widespread anti-Western sentiment exists among lower class elements throughout the Middle East. As the agencies that traditionally have exercised control break down, or become weakened, this sentiment comes to the surface.



## Recommendations.

The United States does not profit from having Algeria become a center of radical Islam, as already is the case with Iran. The radicals in both countries view the Gulf as the locale of the Holy Places, Mecca and Medina, an area *haram* (forbidden) to infidels (whereas we see it as the place where the oil is). At this moment, when the United States is trying to consolidate its position in the Gulf, we can ill afford to have it become a focus of anti-American activity.

The United States can take a number of steps to counter this situation. First of all, we must recognize that all of the regimes that have been discussed are in desperate shape economically; they cannot remain stable if their economies go on deteriorating. At the same time, the United States is their most likely source of help. This, of course, raises an immediate complication—we, ourselves, are suffering economically and are in no position to dispense largesse. How do we reconcile our need to cut back, with the regimes' need for stepped up assistance?

There are a number of approaches that the United States might take. We could, for example, put pressure on the Saudis, the Kuwaitis, and the other Gulf shaykhs. They previously supported some of the threatened regimes, only to eliminate aid after OPERATION DESERT STORM.<sup>47</sup> We should ask them to reconsider their cutoff, since it is in the shaykhs' interest to prevent the spread of radical Islam, a movement inimical to their welfare.

The United States could also try to interest the Europeans in helping out. Perhaps we could divide the Middle East into regions, the western and eastern portions. Countries like Spain, France, Italy—and even Great Britain—have a stake in the Magreb (the west).<sup>48</sup> Let them assist the beleaguered governments economically, if for no other reason than to compensate for their immigration restrictions, which have complicated the region's economic crises.

As for the United States, priorities are going to have to be established whereby countries are rated according to how they

relate to our security needs—those that are vital, we will support; those that are not must be pruned, even if they have major constituencies in the United States and a supposititious claim to our loyalty.

For example, Egypt controls our strategic lines of communication, most notably the Suez Canal. It is also an ideal base of operations should the United States have to intervene in the Gulf. Could we, were trouble to arise in the Saudi peninsula, say, protect the oil fields without the availability of Egypt as a staging ground? If we could not easily do so, we may have to factor this into the U.S. budget equations.

On the other hand, domestic pressures within the United States may mandate more, not less foreign aid cuts. In this case, the military will have to rethink its strategy, to eliminate reliance on unstable allies. This, however, would be a most serious undertaking, and one that would expose United States to grave risks. We should not even consider such a move until we have carried out a thorough-going national debate on the question.

In the author's view, U.S. interests in the region require—at a minimum—stable, friendly regimes in Egypt and Saudi Arabia; they are the region's centers of gravity. The fall of either to hostile forces would deal a catastrophic blow to U.S. security. Therefore—barring any great swing in domestic public opinion—we should go on cooperating with both.

There is one more aspect of this problem that needs to be considered, namely the so-called northern threat. Both Iraq and Iran regard the Gulf as a part of their sphere of interest, and hence are potentially a threat to Saudi Arabia. To guard against encroachments by either state, we need the help of Turkey. Indeed, Ankara is our natural partner in this regard, inasmuch as it is already a member of NATO. However, the Turks are suffering economically because of the EC states' unwillingness to make them members of the Community. The reluctance of the EC seems indefensible, when security threats are multiplying on NATO's southern flank. The United States should encourage the EC to reconsider its refusal.

Along with this, Turkey is also having to fend off demands from its Kurdish citizens for greater independence. Presently over 10 million Kurds reside in southeastern Turkey, and were they to break away from Ankara's control, the entire northern tier could destabilize (Turkey, Iran, Pakistan). The United States should therefore tread carefully in encouraging the Kurds of Iraq to seek independence. The Kurdish movement is a transnational one; whatever gains are made by the southern Kurds will be sought by their northern compatriots as well.<sup>49</sup>

A final note, the Turks are crucial to maintaining stability also in the area of Central Asia. They share a common ethnic identity with the inhabitants of several newly independent republics of the former Soviet Union. As a consequence, they are an alternative to Iran, which is striving to extend its influence northward into this region.

In the author's view, a far sighted grand strategy must promote Egypt and Saudi Arabia, *and* Turkey—all three, as pillars on which overall regional security is based; such an arrangement is also the best means of containing Islamic radicalism.

### **Conclusion.**

In sum, the author perceives that the Middle East is entering a critical phase. Almost all the regimes in the area are in serious economic difficulty. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, and economic reverses here in the United States, erstwhile sources of external aid are limited.

To maintain themselves, some of the regimes—like that of Algeria—are attempting to shift towards a market economy. This, however, is not an easy transition, and in the process of attempting it, the regimes expose themselves to attack.

U.S. policymakers have up till now assumed that nothing could—or should—be done to help while this transition was being managed. The attitude has been that a certain amount of pain is inevitable, and the quicker that it is gotten over the sooner the patient will be on the road to recovery.

This study has shown, however, that in two important instances the populace of countries experiencing hardship have refused to stand the pain; urbanized peasants in Iran and Algeria have rebelled. The regime produced by the Iranian upheaval is directly inimical to the United States. The class that is maneuvering to take power in Algeria has given clear signs that it, too, is hostile.

We should ask ourselves: Is this a trend that we want to see continue? And if not, what is the United States prepared to do to arrest it?

## ENDNOTES

1. A Pan movement, as we construe it, is any organized effort to mobilize communities across international frontiers on the basis of a shared interest. Hence Pan-Slavism was an attempt by Moscow in the last century to mobilize Christian Slavs, living under the Turks, to support the Czar. Pan Islam would thus represent an effort to organize Muslims worldwide. The effort would have to be orchestrated from a single center, e.g., Tehran.

2. The name Brooms comes from their practice of letting their beards grow until they are long and straggly and resemble the brooms with which dustmen sweep the streets in Algiers. The youths may have attended university, but almost invariably they are first generation arrivals in Algiers and the other major cities from the so-called Bled, the countryside. Hence they are urbanized peasants. Looked at another way, they are the third generation of Algerians after the 1962 war of liberation. The first lived through the period when the French ran the country and commercial life was dominated by the Jews. When some one million French and six hundred thousand Jews left Algeria after the liberation, the second generation took over, largely Frenchified Algerians. This group still controls the country, and has refused to incorporate into the leadership elements of the third generation, the youths from the countryside.

3. These ghettos, in Arab lands, are known as *baladi* quarters, from the Arabic *balad*, country. *Baladi* is akin to the English expression "neighborhood," as one might say, "kids from the old neighborhood." At the same time, *baladi* refers to the countryside, the area outside the city. Hence, the implication that the worst quarters of the city comprise unassimilated country people.

4. This was the Muslim Brotherhood, which we will discuss below. The conditions whereby the Brotherhood came to compete in elections were these—food riots erupted in 1989, and the government, to relieve pressure on itself, asked several parties to share power with it. One of these was the

Brotherhood. It won 22 out of 80 seats, and this entitled it to take five portfolios in the government. The Jordanian branch of the Brotherhood, however, supports the King, and has done so for years. Hence, King Hussein did not suffer overly from having the Brotherhood in Parliament.

5. See "U.S. Aide Calls Muslim Militants Big Concern In World," *The New York Times*, January 1, 1992; "Tunisia Faces Renewed Threat From Islamic Fundamentalists," *The Washington Post*, January 11, 1992; "Moslem militants polarize Arab World," *The Financial Times*, January 14, 1992; "The Saudis Are Fearful, Too, As Islam's Militant Tide Rises," *The New York Times*, December 31, 1991; "A Fundamentalist Finds a Fulcrum in Sudan," *The New York Times*, January 29, 1992; "Tunis Chief Calls for Arab Repression of Militants," *The New York Times*, January 5, 1992; "Election Jars Algeria's Rulers," *The Washington Post*, December 30, 1991; "Wishful Thinking About Islamic Fundamentalism," *The Washington Post*, January 19, 1992; "Jordan keeps a wary eye on the Islamic Surge in Algeria," *The Financial Times*, January 29, 1992; "Algeria's New Muslims," *The Washington Post*, January 27, 1992.

6. See "Sudan Is Seen as Safe Base For Mideast Terrorist Groups," *The New York Times*, January 26, 1992; "Islam in Algeria: An Echo of Iran, but Not a Repeat," *The New York Times*, December 29, 1991; "Iran Upsets Algeria by Backing Muslims," *The New York Times*, January 19, 1992; "U.S. to Counter Iran in Central Asia," *The New York Times*, February 6, 1992; "Iran and Turkey Vie for Political, Economic Influence in Soviet Muslim States," *The Washington Post*, November 24, 1991; "Hostages' Release Aids Iran's Ambitions for Larger Third World Role," *The Washington Post*, November 18, 1991; "Egypt Fearful of Iran's influence over Sudan," *The Financial Times*, December 18, 1991.

7. As the reader will come to see, we put a different stress on events in Iran than is usually done. We emphasize that the revolt was started by the people, and the clergy came along later. Moreover, no matter how hard they tried, the clergy could not displace the lower class elements from control of the movement, and later from running the government. The Revolutionary Guards, which are almost entirely made up of the lower classes, are as well entrenched now as when the revolt commenced.

8. For this view see Graham Fuller's article in *The Washington Post*, "Islamic Fundamentalism No Long Term Threat," January 13, 1992. Fuller completely mistakes the nature of the revolt, ignoring its class dimension.

9. The *sharia* is the legal code of Islam. It exists in four separate, distinct compilations, to which various groups within the community subscribe. The codes were put together by great Muslim jurists, at a relatively early date. They are the law of Islam.

10. Called the Revolt of a Million Martyrs, the struggle lasted 8 years.

11. It is estimated that foreign debts of at least \$24 billion are eating up at least 75 percent of Algeria's hard currency earnings. Oil prices plummeted after the Saudis increased output in a move to assist Iraq in its war against Iran. In 1985, it appeared that the Iraqis had been successful in overcoming the fanaticism of the Iranians and their human wave attacks. Hence, the war front stabilized and it appeared that Iraq could gradually sap the Iranians' morale, forcing them to negotiate a settlement. The Saudis at this time were over producing on their oil quota, which hurt Iran by forcing the oil price down. This made living conditions inside Iran extremely difficult. However, it also hurt countries like Algeria, which had been benefiting from the high price of oil until that point.

12. There appears to be some confusion about this. The Fund maintains that it did not enter into a formal relationship with the Algerians until after the riots had occurred, hence any reforms undertaken were not at its behest. However, a number of sources dispute this, including *The New York Times*. See Youssef M. Ibrahim, "Islamic Plan for Algeria Is on Display," *The New York Times*, January 7, 1992. The author was also told (both by knowledgeable sources in Algeria and by the U.S. State Department) that the Fund made the requests which led to the rioting.

13. Unemployment in Algeria at the time of the 1988 riots was over 30 percent. The unemployed population tended to be mainly youths, since over 70 percent of the country is less than 30 years old. The youths usually lived at home, where their mothers cooked for them. Sometimes they would sleep in shifts, with working members of the family occupying beds at night. When not at home, they would hang out in the mosques, there being nowhere else to congregate. As long as the government kept them well subsidized, the youths had some outlet—they could, for example, go on occasional expeditions to France for R&R. But once austerity was enacted, they had no escape.

14. This whole question of corruption is a key to understanding the phenomenon of Islamic revolt. The appearance in Iran, and in Algeria, of nouveau riche elements was a major cause of popular dissatisfaction. Often the resentment was generated by the fact that those who prospered made no attempt to hide their wealth, rather they flaunted it. The author was told by an Egyptian police officer that "The people know. They are not fooled. When someone who has no education brings home in a year hundreds of thousands of dinars—more than the average Egyptian could hope to see in a lifetime—the conclusion is that he has made it by corruption. This rankles."

15. The shortages came during a particularly hot summer. The on-again-off-again nature of the water system, coupled with the already difficult living conditions in the lower class quarters touched off the revolt.

16. The FLN is modeled along the lines of communist parties in eastern Europe, and in the former Soviet Union. It was originally composed of

underground fighters, many of whom had no aptitude for running a government; even so they refused to coopt individuals who might have performed this function.

17. The elite in Algeria is to a large degree made up of bona fide descendants of the so-called "martyrs," individuals who died in the struggle for independence. It is estimated that 600,000 of these are duly registered, and they have first claim to benefits. Of course, along with these certified elite, are many others who share in the good life, thanks to their connections to FLN politicians.

18. The *Nahda* is something of a mystery to the author, because, in his interviews with knowledgeable Tunisians, it was difficult to get a grasp of it. If one speaks to Tunisian government officials, they make it out to be a dangerous threat. But, when evidence is demanded, this turns out on examination to be meager. For example, this past summer, the government produced a cache of weapons it claimed *Nahda* adherents had amassed in preparation for a coup. But the weapons were extremely primitive—pieces of pipe joined to boards which were supposed to serve as rifles. Also, it appears that the *Nahda* draws its membership mostly from the lower-middle and middle classes, people who are associated with the professions or with "culture." For example, many book sellers supposedly belong. These are not the lower class elements that made the revolt in Algeria, and they do not seem the sort of people who would be likely to revolt, in any case.

19. Sadat's assassination usually is ascribed to recalcitrant Egyptians as revenge for his having signed the peace with Israel. In fact, it seems the Muslim Brotherhood (see below) paid for the bullet, under circumstances that had nothing to do with Israel. Sadat originally had encouraged the Brotherhood as a foil against Egyptian leftists, who were major supporters of Sadat's predecessor, Nasser. However, Sadat came to view the Brotherhood as a subversive organization, and so he set about to break its power. He went too far, jailing the Supreme Guide of the movement, and then proceeding to boast publicly of the humiliations to which he had subjected this individual. To avenge this shame, the Brotherhood recruited a young army officer, who had himself been dishonored by Sadat's treatment of his mother (supposedly Egyptian police had beaten her), and he carried out the assassination.

20. The last significant religious rebel, Mustafa Buya Ali, was shot to death in 1987 while trying to rob a bank. His manner of dying reflects the state of the religious opposition, in as much as he was clearly hard pressed financially, to be robbing banks for a living. At the same time, the author regards the fact of there being no religious opposition as of great importance. It seems to confirm that we are dealing with a lower class revolt, since only something of this order could release the enormous energy required to launch a movement overnight, which is what occurred in this case.

21. As will be explained in detail below, this is the traditional role of the clergy under Islam. They both calm things down and fire them up. The clergy are the controls on mass action, at least previously this was the case. For a full treatment of how the higher clergy performed this role in Egypt at the time of Napoleon's invasion see *Al-Jabarti's Chronicle of the First Seven Months of the French Occupation of Egypt*, edited and translated by S. Moreh, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1975.

22. Bel Hadj was subsequently jailed, and, as a consequence, direction of the movement passed almost completely into the hands of the youth leaders, i.e., the Brooms.

23. Arabic is one of a few languages—Greek is another—which preserves both a classical and colloquial form of address. The classical is the language of scholarship, and is understood by educated Arabs throughout the Arab world. Colloquial, on the other hand, is a form of patois and usually is only really understood in the locale where it originated. Thus, a Moroccan probably would not understand an Iraqi speaking his (Iraqi) colloquial, and vice versa. There is a further complication inasmuch as the grammar of the classical is completely different from the colloquial, and thus a crowd of worshipers at a Friday prayer service, listening to Bel Hadj discoursing in classical, would find it hard to follow his meaning. Why then should not Bel Hadj simply speak in colloquial? This brings up a whole complex array of issues. It is possible to say—and, N.B., this is a simplistic explanation—that Arabs delight in hearing classical Arabic spoken, and an orator's prestige may derive from his ability to handle it well.

24. In the case of Algeria, the hold of these officially appointed clergy has been weakened because money has flowed into the country from Saudi Arabia to fund so-called unofficial Islam, i.e., clerics who are not in the pay of the state. This money is a source of controversy. It has been alleged that it emanates from the Saudi government. In fact, it appears that it comes from wealthy Saudis, who contribute as private individuals because they view the Algerian government as "communist," the money having been solicited by the radical clerics in Algeria. Apparently, Muslims from all over the world are in the practice of importuning rich Saudis who are known to be an easy touch, as we say. This phenomenon of Saudis giving money to fund an "unofficial" religious establishment should be the object of further research. Such wealthy Saudis would not be likely to have approved the lower class revolt, and hence it would be quite ironic if their money prepared the ground for the upheaval. Evidence that this is the case is the fact that Algeria's leaders, after the army took over the government, approached Riyadh with appeals for financial support to combat the FIS. Had the Saudis been bankrolling the movement officially, as many have alleged, the Algerian leaders would not have made this approach. See *The Financial Times*, February 20, 1992, "Algeria's new rulers turn to Gulf states for aid."



25. Islam is divided into two major sects—the Sunnis and Shias. The Sunnis are by far the larger number; they comprise practically all Muslim states with the exception of Iran which is almost 100 percent Shia. The Sunnis are also traditionally more supportive of the status quo. The Shias, being a minority sect, are more conscious of injustice, and more likely to confront the authorities over such issues.

26. *Hadiths* are anecdotes from the life of Mohammed. Muslims use them to guide their conduct. For example, a pious Muslim wanting to know how he should behave in a particular situation will consult the *hadith*. There he will find a tale of Muhammad, about how the Prophet behaved in a roughly analogous situation, or he may find a specific saying of the Prophet that seems to apply to the situation. In the particular instance that we are discussing here, the Algerian youth have seized upon a *hadith*, to the effect that "(Muhammad said) whoever among you (sees) the abomination/ on him the obligation (to correct it)/ By hand (i.e., force), or tongue, or heart, and the last is the weakest." The key phrase is "whoever among you (Arabic, *min*)," since this implies that all Muslims have a right—and indeed, an obligation—to attack injustices, whereas the *ulama* say that only someone who understands such matters should undertake this job.

27. If one were to put a benign interpretation on this phenomenon, one would say that it is a crude but effective means of circulating elites. Not only would individuals have to submit to the puritanical dictates of the code in respect to morals, but their business dealings, too, would be affected. The *sharia* prohibits the taking of interest. If strictly enforced, this would compel the elite in Algeria, and indeed anywhere else for that matter, to abandon the country, assuming, that is, that they wanted to hang onto their fortunes.

28. For example, Abdelqader Hashani, one of the Broomers who led the revolt, and was recently jailed by the Algerian army, is an engineer, who dropped out of the university.

29. The movement is clearly manipulating the election issue to gain power. Had it not been for the regime's ineptitude, the option of competing in the elections would never have been presented to the FIS. What is important is what the movement activists do *after* they gain power—however they gain it—and it seems clear that the activists mean to revolutionize the society.

30. This antipathy goes back to the very founding of the religion, when the Shia sect split off from the main body of Islam because the cousin of the Prophet, Ali, did not become the Caliph, leader of the faithful. Ever since, the Shias have refused to recognize the community-appointed successors to Muhammad, which in the eyes of the Sunnis is the rankest heresy.

31. The author has not been able to find any evidence that the Khomeinists have deliberately exported their revolution to Algeria, and therefore that they are in any way responsible for what has occurred there.

32. Some similarities have already been alluded to. For example, in both countries, the regimes tried to accelerate modernization and ran into difficulties, causing them to reverse course with the result that the poor were hurt. In both countries the poor perceived that not everyone was suffering from the crisis; some were actually profiting from it. The peasants of Iran and Algeria both regarded the life of the cities to which they had immigrated as corrupt. The police of both countries over reacted in their initial attempts to suppress popular unrest, which further enflamed popular passions. Perhaps the most interesting similarity, however, is the role of the clergy. In both countries, the clergy were experiencing sharp pressure from the regime, and seized upon the popular unrest as a way of breaking free from regime control. This whole issue requires a great deal more research, which is beyond the scope of this study.

33. The sociologist, that is, as opposed to the intelligence analyst. An intelligence analyst looking into the FIS movement would concentrate on facts such as the names of the leaders and their biographies, the groups making up the movement and their sources of funding. The sociologist, on the contrary, seeks to determine what is causing this particular situation to occur and how is it likely to develop. A good example of the intelligence analyst approach is Barry Rubin's *Islamic Fundamentalism in Egyptian Politics*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990. Rubin barely discusses the mass aspect of the fundamentalist phenomenon but deals exclusively with subversive groups. In the end, he concludes the movement is not a threat because the groups can't overthrow Mubarak. Our approach stresses that the groups are epi-phenomenal; what really counts is the level of discontent of the masses.

34. One has to suspect that the government of Tunisia is exploiting the religious opposition to crack down on all opposition inside the country, not merely the religious. Talks with democrats produced this view. The democratic opposition deplores the indiscriminate nature of the regime's suppression, since it means that the democrats have no forum from which to appeal for popular support.

35. The black police guard embassies and are the principal riot control agents, the white police direct traffic and investigate criminal activity, the General Directorate is an internal intelligence agency that attempts to monitor the public mood, and the *Mukhabarat* monitors external threats.

36. The black police were the lowest of the low. They were extremely badly treated, kept in communal barracks and permitted only conjugal visits with their families on the weekends. Moreover, the barracks were located

next to the Pyramids and the fancy hotels, where the police could observe the wealthy at play.

37. There is an additional problem with the police. As is the case with police everywhere, they are susceptible to corruption, i.e., they tend to shake down individuals who are vulnerable. As mentioned earlier the poor community supplies many of its own services. The manner in which it does this is often illegal. For example, individuals operate businesses without licenses. This encourages the police to batten off them, and this drives a further wedge between the police and the community. (It also gives the police a stake in maintaining the pernicious conditions they are supposed to correct, since they are aggrandizing themselves from the system.)

38. There is some anecdotal evidence to support this claim. In late summer of 1991, a vicious riot erupted in Imbaba, in which, according to the press, Muslims fought with Coptic Christians and a number of people were killed. In fact, several accounts emerged of what had transpired, all substantially different. It appears that no one knew what actually had occurred because the community wouldn't talk, and the police could not make them. Interestingly, at this same time another disturbance marred the African Games, hosted by Egypt. *Baladi* crowds pushed into the stadium during a soccer match, sat in the VIP section and refused to be dislodged. For a country like Egypt, where ordinarily law and order is rigorously maintained, this is exceedingly ominous.

39. In the case of the Shah, his disfunction was to a great degree caused by health problems—he was dying of cancer. At the same time, however, because of the way he had structured his military, it was of little use to him when crisis struck. Fearing a coup, he had eliminated lateral communications between departments. All commands reported directly to the Shah. Without direct guidance from him, they could not function.

40. To be more precise—Jordan is in an extremely shaky condition, and the regime there could be overthrown. This would come about were the Israelis to begin mass expulsions of Palestinians, as they may well do. Tunisia is difficult to predict because, as already indicated, it is uncertain—to the author, at least—just what is going on there. The Tunisians seem ill disposed to revolt, but the level of repression is unusually high and the economy is deteriorating. Egypt is certain to see more rioting—even if money keeps flowing in the form of foreign subsidies; its problems are that intractable. Were the subsidies to be cut off, or even drastically lowered, the author believes Mubarak could not survive.

41. The author was caught up in this riot and so was able to observe it from the inside, as it were. Sadat was following dictates of the IMF to cut subsidies. A protest over the cuts erupted, which quickly got out of hand. Most alarming was the depth of lower class resentment against the well-to-do. The author witnessed the mob pulling Mercedes cars over to the

side, making the drivers get out and then burning the cars. This same phenomenon occurred in the Algerian riots of 1988.

42. The Muslim Brotherhood is the bugaboo of the intelligence community and the editorial writers. It is frequently made out to be the directing influence of worldwide fundamentalist conspiracies. What the conspiracy theorists overlook is that—as has already been pointed out—the Brotherhood in Jordan supports the King, and, as for the Egyptian branch, it is led by wealthy Egyptians, who—while they may oppose Mubarak—are deathly afraid of a lower class revolt. Hence, the idea of them promoting such a thing in Algeria is silly. This drive to tie disparate occurrences into a grand conspiracy becomes absurd when we view events in the trans-Caucasus and Central Asia. In the trans-Caucasus, the Azeris, who are Muslims, and Christian Armenians are killing each other, but this has little religious significance. If anything it is tribal; the two groups claim the same land, and have been feuding over it for centuries. As for the Central Asians, they are not disturbing anybody, and still they are made out to be part of the conspiracy. Supposedly they are allying with the fundamentalist Iranians. It is doubtful that they would do this, since what the Central Asian Muslims need is a boost to their economy, and Iran is strapped financially. Finally, we have the Sudan in Africa, which is being touted as the evil center of the whole grand conspiracy process. Khartoum couldn't run a conspiracy in neighboring Ethiopia, much less thousands of miles away in Algeria or Jordan. In effect, this whole notion of conspiracy is Sunday tabloid stuff, and not worthy of the intelligence community.

43. There is, of course, always the alternative of developing oil resources here at home, or stepping up conservation. Were this to be done effectively, we would not have to be so concerned about our strategic position in this area. However, it does not appear that the United States is going to avail itself of this alternative, and therefore security in the region remains of paramount importance.

44. In his conversations in the area, the author was struck with the depth of the resentment occasioned by the air war. The claim was made repeatedly that this showed the racist nature of the Bush Administration, since a "barbarity" such as this would never have been visited on a non-Arab people. It appears that Middle Easterners do sincerely believe that the aim of the air war was to destroy Iraq's economic infrastructure, thus preventing it from continuing its modernizing effort.

45. There is some evidence that the Egyptian government sought to convince the U.S. Administration that support for Saddam was nonexistent.

46. Reliable sources told the author that, initially, the FIS leaders were unwilling to openly support Saddam, fearing to lose Saudi funding for their movement. However, when they realized that the passions of the mob were beyond control, they put themselves at the head of the demonstrations

calling for an Iraqi victory. The same phenomenon occurred in Tunisia, and in Egypt (to a lesser extent). In Jordan, the Muslim Brotherhood demonstrated in behalf of Saddam, but then, as has been pointed out, the Brotherhood there supports King Hussein and the King was on the side of Iraq.

47. The same sources that reported the above (note 46) also told us that subsequent to the riots the wealthy Saudis who had been giving money to the FIS stopped contributing. This also occurred in Tunisia with money to *Nahda*. If this is true, it would reinforce the author's position that the FIS is a radical movement, and would undercut the argument of people like Graham Fuller that the Fundamentalist movement is benign.

48. Spain, for example, gets 60 percent of its natural gas from Algeria.

49. What is happening in Iraq among the Kurds may be tied into this burgeoning urbanized peasant revolt. The Kurds could be classified as urbanized peasants led by their *agas*, tribal chieftains who have grown wealthy in profiteering on the Iran-Iraq War. The Kurds are fiercely devoted to Islam, and in the past have served in the forefront of reactionary movements. For example, the Kurds backed the last Sultan of Islam in his attempt to frustrate the Young Turks from taking power in the old Ottoman Empire. They also were used by the British to try and overthrow the regime of Kamal Ataturk after World War I.

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